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SUBJECT: DART TEAM WEST WAVE I FINAL REPORT: 14 JUNE

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Summary  
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1. From 26 April to 13 June, DART Team West traveled thousands of miles in Iraq, conducting assessments, liaising with local Coalition forces and Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) personnel, identifying and funding emergency and community activities, facilitating humanitarian assistance, and encouraging the respect of human rights. DART Team West's area of responsibility (AOR) was Al Anbar, Babil, Karbala, An Najaf, Al Qadisiyah, Wasit, and Al Muthanna governorates. By mid-June, the team found conditions in its seven western and south central governorates to be near or at pre-war levels in the major sectoral areas of water, sanitation, food, and health. DART Team West has also observed reduced fuel lines, improved security, and reopened schools. DART Team West witnessed and supported the resurgence of local judiciaries and the birth of human rights organizations in at least five of the governorates. With DART Team West assistance, the Public Distribution System (PDS) resumed in June with only minor problems, thus allaying fears of disruptions to the food ration system that feeds the majority of Iraq's population. In close collaboration with DART Team West, NGO cooperative agreement partners have begun executing emergency response activities in each of the seven AOR governorates. In the last several weeks, DART Team West has observed a growing emergence of non-governmental organization (NGO) and international organization (IO) involvement in responding to regional humanitarian problems. Several United Nations agencies will be based regionally in Al Hillah by the end of June. End Summary.

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Food Security  
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2. The Public Distribution System (PDS) continues to supply Iraqi beneficiaries in the west and south central governorates with full food rations during June without major disruptions. DART Team West conducted the following food-security site visits: Al Hillah (daily), Karbala (thrice), An Najaf (thrice), Ad Diwaniyah (twice), As Samawah (once), and Al Kut (once). However, DART Team West was unable to visit the capital of Al Anbar governorate, Ar Ramadi, due to insecurity, but it did visit several cities elsewhere in the governorate.

3. Reports from the U.N. World Food Program (WFP) and the Ministry of Trade (MOT) in DART Team West's AOR stated that food supplies are arriving regularly from the major supply pipeline corridors, and local food agents are collecting commodities for distribution. All relevant pipeline dispatch data is maintained and distributed by WFP. The first post-conflict food distributions began on or about 1 June in the south-central region through the operational and monitoring support of WFP, MOT, the Coalition forces, and USAID. WFP is the lead agency providing oversight and management support to the MOT and has established national PDS teams in each governorate capital, as well as a WFP area office in Al Hillah. As expected, some PDS anomalies have developed, some endemic in the south-central region, some isolated to a particular governorate. Most of these issues have been, or continue to be, resolved through collaborative and persistent efforts among the WFP, DART, MOT, and Coalition Civil Affairs (CA) staffs.

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Areas of Food Security Concerns  
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14. As the June distributions continue, DART Team West has identified several minor areas of concern that could present future hindrances in managing an efficient PDS:

Communications: Links between the MOT offices in Baghdad and the MOT offices in each governorate need to be strengthened. MOT warehouse managers, silo managers, grain board managers and re-registration/ration center managers do not have communication capabilities to receive instructions from, or communicate inquiries to, a central authority. The lack of adequate communication hampers the resolution of key PDS issues including:

- Instructions regarding the program for the reception, payment, and storage of locally grown wheat;

- Instructions to food agents, through MOT representatives, on transportation cost reimbursements, and any changes in distribution procedures;

- Instructions to MOT managers on procedures to provide overtime payments for appropriate warehouse and silo workers; and

- Instructions to MOT on general financial management procedures to manage operation funds, particularly with respect to the current \$50,000 disbursement for MOT operations.

Communication should flow in both directions and MOT should be able to consider the various governorate problems and react accordingly. As the PDS becomes more reliable and less dependent on WFP in the coming months, MOT will need to communicate to the governorate offices on a regular basis, making timely communication an important part of efficient food delivery.

15. Collaboration: MOT management personnel need to understand the importance of collaboration and cooperation in conducting the business of the PDS during this initial phase of start up. The MOT must cooperate more fully with WFP national staff requests to improve management methods or resolve problems. DART Team West reports that in several governorates, MOT management have made commitments with WFP area office staff or WFP international staff, yet were reluctant to make changes or implement the required actions for improvement. As the PDS continues, MOT personnel need to understand the importance of implementing required changes to the PDS management. Establishing this precedent now will become a key aspect of future changes in PDS as Iraq becomes more economically stable and PDS phase-out plans develop.

16. Re-registering Beneficiaries: The June distribution will probably reveal weaknesses in the PDS. Some of these weaknesses are known, others will be learned, but one probable concern will be identifying those Iraqi citizens that have fallen out of the PDS. Although the MOT re-registration/ration centers are vigorously re-registering beneficiaries in all the governorates, there will be marginalized groups, such as prisoners of war, released prisoners, refugee returnees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and others that missed the June ration for various reasons. WFP will be monitoring distributions at the beneficiary level, but will need strong cooperation from MOT in order to address the PDS needs of those groups and individuals that missed the June distribution and to assure they are included in the PDS for future distributions.

17. Working Parameters: It is important to reiterate DART Team West's position within the current Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) structure in Al Hillah. DART Team West has performed a variety of reporting and liaison activities among the different agencies working within the PDS in this AOR and will continue to do so. (Note: With DART Team West's departure from Al Hillah on June 13, a new DART Team South has been positioned in Al Hillah to continue humanitarian monitoring and programming activities for Al Anbar, Babil, Karbala, An Najaf, Al Qadisiyah, Wasit, Al Muthanna, Maysan, Dhi Qar and Al Basrah governorates. End Note.) The working relationships developed with CPA and military Civil Affairs units within DART Team West's AOR have been successful, in part, because of the understanding that DART Team West operates and reports within the parameters established earlier by USAID and CPA. DART Team West's independence in determining priority activities and maintaining its reporting responsibilities is key to its value to ongoing operations in its AOR and imperative for its continued success in the region. South central CPA has been very supportive of these conditions and the new DART Team South looks forward to continuing a strong and productive relationship with CPA in Al Hillah under these same conditions.

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## Human Rights and Protection

18. Mass Graves: Dozens of mass graves have been uncovered since the fall of the former regime. Most of these mass graves are a direct result of the killings that occurred in 1991 when Shiite Muslims were massacred by Iraqi military forces after their uprising and buried within are the remains of men, women, and children. Residents had been using their hands, shovels, and tractors to excavate the bodies. Community members, who have been working at these sites and have been looking for the remains of family members, claim that most bodies had either been shot or buried alive; some had been tortured, and others were bound and blindfolded prior to being killed.

19. The community has been able to identify remains in three ways: by photo identification (ID) card, by another ID card with a personal number (similar to a social security card), and by personal items such as clothing, jewelry, etc. Bodies not yet identified are either put in piles or in plastic bags (two to three bodies per bag). In some areas, the non-identified remains have been re-buried. Community members are eager to find the remains of their loved ones in order to provide a proper Shiite religious burial. However, in many instances, they have agreed to leave these gravesites untouched until proper forensics teams can examine the areas and recover the remains appropriately. For the most part, the community understands that uncoordinated exploitation of gravesites diminishes the probability of identifying the missing and may fail to preserve evidence that could bring perpetrators to justice. "INFORCE", a British forensics team, is beginning its assessments of the various gravesites in the region. Exhumations thus far by the local community continue to be relatively organized.

110. Human Rights Societies: There is an obvious absence of civil-society groups in the south-central region. Ba'ath Party members had controlled most, if not all, of these groups (including the National Federation of Iraqi Women and local youth groups) during the former regime. After the end of the recent conflict, human rights societies were stood up (mainly through the local lawyers' associations) in most of the governorates, according to many of the Coalition Civil Affairs units with whom DART Team West spoke. Iraqis were eager to monitor, prevent, and respond to past and current human rights abuses. Many explained they had been waiting for years to reclaim their rights and freedom.

111. DART Team West visited local human rights societies in Al Hillah, Karbala, and An Najaf. Much of the work these organizations are doing is quite impressive. The initiatives include: educating their communities on rights-based approaches to conflict and violence; working on demining and unexploded ordnance (UXO) prevention; locating mass graves and assisting the community in identification of loved ones; locating prisoners of war and missing soldiers; and recording war damages for future compensation. These societies are also using local television, radio, and newsletters to educate local and international communities about their efforts. However, despite all of the work that these societies are accomplishing, there is a potential problem that can hamper their effectiveness. Communication is quite difficult with many of these societies not having working phones, and if they do, they can often only be operational within their local area. This limits the amount of communication the societies can have with one another, leading to potential tension among one another, as there is a lack of standardization of activities and no clear headquarters.

112. Retribution/Revenge: There is evidence of small pockets of hostility with regard to revenge and retribution in communities in the south central region. However, with the help of religious leaders, human rights societies, and Coalition forces, these incidents have not escalated to a dangerous level. For example, aides to a highly respected Shiite religious leader distributed a flier that admonished against any revenge violence and emphasized the need to work through proper judicial systems. As long as the insecurity issue continues, however, the potential for escalating violence among Iraqis will increase.

## Human Rights and Protection: Next Steps

113. DART Baghdad, DART Team South and DART Team North will need to continue to monitor human rights and protection issues in all of Iraq's 18 governorates. DART Team West is providing a list of next steps for DART Baghdad, DART Team South and DART Team North staff to use:

-- Continue to monitor and report any human rights incidents to proper Coalition forces, CPA, appropriate United Nations

agencies, and to Iraqi human rights societies and relevant authorities;

-- Continue liaising with the local community on the mass graves issue and ensure that organizations involved in protection and exhumation keep the communities informed of their activities and involved in any decision-making; and

-- Provide human rights societies with the necessary capacity to enhance their work, including formal training on human rights monitoring and on the Geneva Conventions, as well as on organizational management. Many also need basic "office in a box" assistance in order to continue their good work and to begin to forge links with other local and international human rights groups.

#### ----- Assistance to Vulnerable Groups -----

14. During the former regime, there was a small amount of assistance provided to vulnerable groups such as the poor, IDPs, widows, orphans, elderly, and the handicapped. The Ministry of Labor and Social Services had provided a small stipend to many of these individuals depending on family size. In Al Hillah, for example, the Ministry had provided its last quarterly payment of 15,000 to 22,500 Iraqi dinars (1,500 Iraqi dinars = USD 1) in December 2002. These groups are already in a very vulnerable position. Any long-term delay in assistance will exacerbate their vulnerabilities and will create undue hardships that can be avoided.

15. Despite what some may claim, many women and children are treated as second-class citizens in Iraq. It will take time for women to reach an appropriate standard of living and gain full access to basic services. Their own vulnerabilities are apparent, and it is critical to focus on their exigencies, especially education, health, and political participation. Child labor is rife in Iraq, and participation in post-primary education is not a certainty, particularly for girls. Poor economic conditions and cultural norms weigh heavily on childhood opportunities.

#### ----- Protection of Vulnerable Groups: Next Steps -----

16. DART Baghdad, DART Team South and DART Team North will need to continue to monitor the protection of Iraq's vulnerable groups. The DART teams should:

-- Ensure assistance to vulnerable groups is included in CPA strategies and plans (short and long-term);

-- Gather more information on the numbers and composition of vulnerable groups in each governorate; and

-- Guarantee these vulnerable groups are being assisted in the short and long-term through NGOs, IOs, and/or CPA initiatives and programs.

#### ----- Refugee Returns -----

17. In preparation for possible repatriations to the south central region of Iraq, DART Team West discussed refugee repatriation issues with local leadership, NGOs, and WFP in its AOR governorates. Overall, most basic service sectors are up and running in the larger cities including water, electricity, security, food, and health. When asked if refugees would be easily accepted back into the community, most residents seemed supportive of returning Iraqis who have either been expatriates, IDPs, or refugees, as long as they bring skills that can help improve the governorates where they relocate. If returnees have an identification card that shows they are returning Iraqi citizens, they are able to register with the governorate's ration center for a food ration card. While many of the urban sectors in the south-central region are functioning at pre-war levels, rural areas continue to lack proper electricity and water and, in many cases, security, health, and sanitation are below standard requirements.

#### ----- Refugee Returns: Next Steps -----

18. For refugee returns to be successful in Iraq:

-- It will be critical to understand the makeup of these returning refugees, including the number of extremely vulnerable individuals, the breakdown of urban and rural inhabitants, the composition of families, the numbers of males and females, and the percentage with family or relative support networks;

-- Refugee repatriation should begin with a small number of returnees and with those who have local host family support; and

-- Security will be an issue and assisting organizations, such as UNHCR, should liaise and inform Coalition forces, NGOs, and local community leaders to ensure that returnees will have adequate assistance during the first few days of relocation.

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Transition Activities  
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19. With the arrival in Al Hillah this past week of the Office of Transition Initiatives' (OTI) implementing partner, the International Organization for Migration, many projects already identified by Team West's OTI Officer are expected to commence. Other possible OTI projects will also be considered for funding. The Al Hillah projects include office, communications, and computer equipment for the Human Rights Association of Al Hillah and the Babil governorate courthouse. These two refurbishment projects are underway after considerable OTI effort. A funding level of \$50,000 was provided through the south-central CPA discretionary funding mechanism. These projects are a good example of U.S. Government interagency cooperation to rebuild essential governance and civic community infrastructure. Other OTI projects expected to be initiated in Al Hillah include: support to the women's association; an orphanage project; Internet connectivity at the Babylon University graduate school; a city street lighting project; environment and city clean up projects; repair of the telephone exchange; school and medical facility rehabilitation; and support to an independent newspaper, the local television station, and a radio station.

20. DART Team West developed an excellent working relationship with south central CPA, and was considered a full team participant. This is also true of the various Coalition Civil Affairs personnel, and DART Team West's automatic inclusion in the Civil Affairs units as colleagues, working toward the same common goal. Not enough can be said for the support and cooperation received and reciprocated in Al Hillah to make all U.S. Government work much easier.

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Major Sector Updates  
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21. Health: With some exceptions, most hospitals assessed in DART Team West's AOR are functioning at pre-conflict levels, albeit not at optimal standards. Some governorate's have received drugs and supplies from the Ministry of Health in Baghdad, while others continue to wait. For the first time since 1997, drugs are being issued for free. The Ministry of Health's (MOH) dreaded "self-financing" system has largely ended. As a result, some health facilities have seen a doubling in the number of patients being treated.

22. Through its cooperative agreement partners, DART Team West has delivered emergency health kits to six of the seven governorates in its AOR, and the NGO partners have begun health activities in Wasit, Karbala, An Najaf, and Al Anbar governorates. Many governorates are holding first-ever elections for MOH positions from technical department heads to governorate-level general directors. Babil governorate health professionals recently voted out of office its acting general director, a former Ba'athist party member.

23. Concern remains for health facilities in rural areas. DART Team West visited two rural, primary health centers (PHC) and found a dearth of drugs, spartan conditions, and abnormally high malnutrition rates among residents. The Coalition Civil Affairs officer for health issues in An Najaf, recently traveled to several rural PHCs and "sub-clinics" and said conditions ranged from inadequate to abysmal. "The farther we go out, the worse they get," he said. DART Team South and its implementing partners must consider further assessments and interventions in these areas, particularly among pockets of displaced populations.

24. Water and Sanitation: Water supply in the south central region appears to be mostly at pre-conflict levels, although years of neglect has significantly reduced the capacity and quality of water treatment systems and plants, both in the urban and rural areas. Conflict-affected electrical systems limited the supply of water in many urban areas, though water supply problems abated with recent improvements in electrical output. Chronic procurement and funding challenges prior to the recent conflict proved to be a major contributor to significant numbers of childhood diarrhea cases. Each hospital representative who DART Team West interviewed reported that diarrhea was the number one



childhood health problem. Some health facility professionals stated that nearly all admitted children suffered from some form of diarrhea, with roots abetted by poor water and sanitation and exacerbated by malnutrition.

125. DART Team West's implementing partners are conducting emergency water interventions in Wasit, Babil, An Najaf, and Al Anbar, and will soon begin work in Al Qadisiyah and Karbala governorates. While NGOs have the capacity to carry out relatively large-scale urban water projects, they are perfectly suited to contribute in outlying urban and rural areas. With DART funds, CARE is rehabilitating the water treatment system in Al Hillah that provides water to 750,000 people. When completed, the water quality will be improved and the plant's overall capacity will increase from 16 to 75 percent. In rural areas, DART has a number of partners active in emergency responses. The International Rescue Committee is rehabilitating the majority of all compact water units in An Najaf, and Mercy Corps International is improving water systems in villages surrounding Al Kut. Most major city sewage systems are functional, but there are isolated problems that need to be addressed, such as system blockages at hospitals. Overflowing septic systems, which provide sewage needs for up to 70 percent of some city populations, have caused health hazards in isolated neighborhoods and could be addressed by NGOs in the short-term.

126. Electricity: Electricity supplies have increased five-fold in some neighborhoods of Al Hillah compared to before the conflict, yet improved or optimal capacity has not been reached in all areas in the south central region, and may actually have diminished in some governorates. Karbala and Al Hillah will likely see reduced electrical supply by the end of June given changes to and re-prioritization of the regional and national electrical grid. In some areas, residents are receiving power in lieu of local factories. Karbala's major industries are shutdown, yet residents are getting more power than prior to the conflict. Al Kut's largest employer, the textile factory, is not operational for lack of power.

127. Fuel: During its first week in Al Hillah, DART Team West observed vehicle lines at gasoline stations of up to one kilometer in length. Tempers flared and security became a major concern. Coalition forces were dispatched at gasoline stations to prevent further violence. During the last two weeks in Al Hillah, the gasoline crisis appears to have receded. The Coalition has paid for tankers to provide fuel throughout the south-central region. However, less than half of the regional gasoline requirements are being met. Diesel fuel, on the other hand, is relatively plentiful. Since the conflict began on March 20, the primary fuel for cooking, liquid propane gas (LPG), has been extremely scarce throughout DART Team West's AOR. The largest propane gas supplier in the region sold 10,000 cylinders per day before the conflict. By mid-May, the supplier was selling none. The fuel pipelines from northern and southern Iraq were not functioning, and no LPG tankers were providing relief. People were using kerosene as an alternative, if it was available. In some places, the cost of LPG was beyond the means of many. Others resorted to cooking with wood, causing the partial denuding of urban tree coverage in some cities and towns. During the last two weeks, the Coalition has funded the provision of LPG deliveries, offering some immediate relief, but not alleviating the serious shortage in the south-central region.

128. Education: Most schools have been open for more than one month, and nearly all students and teachers have returned. However, for security reasons, many schools are holding abbreviated sessions and conclude early in the afternoon. Some teachers have left the classroom or are working additional jobs to survive because of the small amount paid in salaries. In most governorates, April salaries have been paid to all government workers, and a USD 20 emergency payment has been made. A significant number of May salaries have been paid by the Coalition, or are expected to be paid by mid-June.

#### ----- Security -----

129. The number one problem reported to DART Team West at every assessment has been insecurity. Prior to the conflict, crime was minimal even in Baghdad. Following the conflict, there was looting in every governorate in the DART Team West's AOR. Hospitals, warehouses, private businesses, vehicles, orphanages, electric transmission lines, and nearly everything of any value were susceptible to theft. At the time of DART Team West's entry into Iraq on 26 April, schools were closed, emergency services were limited at health facilities, and businesses opened with restricted hours and wary eyes. Since the end of April, the team

observed a significant increase in trained police officers on patrol and guarding essential facilities. As of 7 June in Al Hillah, Coalition forces had trained and armed 584 local Iraqi police officers in four-day police academies. Although more police training is ongoing, the Iraq people's fear of insecurity appears to be waning, though they are still not completely comfortable with current security conditions.

130. UXOs and mines continue to be problematic, although some awareness programs are underway. UXO and mine-awareness posters are visible in public areas, NGOs, Coalition forces, the United Nations, and other agencies are beginning education activities. The El Hideria health clinic, 40 kilometers north of An Najaf, has received more than 30 patients injured by UXOs since the end of the conflict, including three who sustained injuries last week. By early May, Ar Rutbah in Al Anbar governorate also had 30 victims of injuries sustained by UXO accidents.

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The Need for Coordination  
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131. All organizations and groups conducting humanitarian and development activities in the western and south central regions of Iraq need to begin exchanging information and providing mutual support. Of vital importance is also to include Iraqi departmental heads in all planning dialogues. Iraqi participation in planning will help empower local officials, increase their levels of responsibility, and most likely provide the best sources of information. DART Team West has observed very limited involvement of local officials in the humanitarian decision-making process. DART Baghdad, DART Team South, and DART Team North must encourage more local involvement whenever and wherever possible.

132. In the early stages of DART Team West's assessments within Iraq, nearly all humanitarian responses were being conducted by Coalition Civil Affairs units. They are still doing the majority of the humanitarian work on the ground, with relatively little funding. A growing number of NGOs and international relief organizations have opened offices or begun field assessments in south-central Iraq, including various U.N. agencies. The World Food Program (WFP) has been the only exception. WFP's Iraqi staff has been operating effectively for weeks. USAID and CPA contractors based in Al Hillah, including Bechtel and the Research Triangle Institute, are visiting and assessing all south-central governorates and are planning response initiatives. To avoid redundancy, and for planning purposes, there must be more interaction and information sharing among all parties involved in the restoration of Iraq. The DARTs can help facilitate this coordination.

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Waiting and Hoping  
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133. When DART Team West's translator was asked to provide his viewpoint on the condition of Iraq, he responded by stating that conditions were improving in Iraq, yet people were waiting for more livelihood improvements and were apprehensive about the future. He is content with the changes the Coalition forces have brought to the residents of Al Hillah and the surrounding governorates. "My family, my friends, we feel it is better," he said. "You liberated us from Saddam Hussein. This is a better thing." He continued, "If there is a central, democratic government, I hope it'll be okay. (With) our oil, our wealth, our land, I think it'll be fine." But, there is a long way to go. "Believe me there are some problems."

134. The DART Team West translator said people accept the Coalition forces, for now. "The Shia don't hate the Coalition forces," he said, "because you're the people who rid us of Saddam Hussein. But we're waiting for you to do your promises. We're waiting for you to help us rebuild Iraq, and have elections, and then leave. Some people are afraid they will never leave us. People here are very poor people. If you don't hurt them, they will never hurt you. If you help them, they will help you." Before accepting the translator position with the DART, he asked his local cleric if it was acceptable to work with the Coalition forces. "If they're working for the Iraqi people," the cleric said, "you can work for them." However, the DART translator added, there was some suspicion among Iraqis of Coalition motives. "We don't know what (is) hidden in your mind," he said.